

New York Sea Grant Report Series

LONG ISLAND BOAT FISHERMEN

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E. Glenn Carls

Faculty of Human Kinetics and Leisure Studies

University of Waterloo, Ontario

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ABSTRACT

This study of Long Island charter and party boat fishermen is based on a user survey conducted in 1975. Included is an examination of demographic traits of boat fishermen, an evaluation of selected activity characteristics, and a measure of user attitudes, opinions, and values. Study results are discussed along with the implications these findings may have for the boat fishing industry.

INTRODUCTION

During the summer and fall of 1975, a survey of Long Island charter and party boat fleet fishermen was conducted. The purpose of the study was to provide information about boat fishermen that could be used in future development of the rental boat industry and for recreational planning and management of the coastal zone. The study had three primary objectives:

1. to develop a demographic profile of Long Island boat fishermen;
2. to evaluate the attitudes and opinions of fishermen toward selected planning and management issues; and
3. to examine certain psycho-social and environmental factors that contribute to or detract from the sport fishing industry.

METHODS

Data were collected by surveying fishermen at three major Long Island locations: Montauk, Captree State Park, and Sheepshead Bay. These sites were selected as major centers of commercial sport fishing and as locations that would provide the most efficacious sampling opportunities. Sampling occurred on randomly selected Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays throughout September, October, and November 1975. Table 1 shows the sampling distribution across the four locations. Differences in total frequencies at the three locations indicate differences in the total numbers of fishermen using the various sites, weather conditions on sampling days, and similar factors.

On a given day at each location, an attempt was made to survey all fishermen present who were 16 or older. A total of 825 questionnaires was distributed, 536 were returned and 413 were complete and suitable for analysis.

Three major sampling conditions influenced the study results:

1. the sample did not include Long Island locations other than those indicated;
2. week day (Monday through Thursday) fishermen were not included in the sample; and
3. spring and summer fishermen were not included in the sample.

The study sample is considered accurate within the sampling parameters described. However, the above limitations suggest caution in extending findings to other times and locations.

RESULTS

Results of the survey are divided into three main groups associated with major components of the questionnaire (see Appendix): (1) demographic characteristics (items 18-22); (2) fishing characteristics (items 1-10, 13, 15-16); and (3) attitude, opinion, and values measurements (items 11-12, 14, 17). These are in turn related to the primary study objectives cited above.

Demographic Characteristics

In order to develop a profile of boat fisherman characteristics, survey respondents were asked to report certain items of personal information. Specifically, items 18-20 of the questionnaire measured the variables age, sex, place of residence, occupation, and income.

AGE

Table 2 shows the distribution of respondents across age groups. Keeping in mind that people under 16 were not included in the survey, the age distribution is generally what would be expected. The average boat fisherman was 35 years old ($x = 35.037$) and the oldest respondent was 78 years old.

By comparison, Table 3 shows the median ages of Long Island boat fishermen and the median ages of Nassau County, Suffolk County, and New York City residents (US Bureau of the Census 1971). Median ages are comparable for the four groups, considering the exclusion of those younger than 16 from the fisherman sample.

SEX

Study results show that Long Island boat fishermen are predominantly male (Table 4). Of the total number of respondents who reported their sex, 90.3% were men.

PLACE OF RESIDENCE

Study figures shown in Table 5 indicate that Long Island boat fishing is largely a local/regional phenomenon. Taken together, New York City, Suffolk County, and Nassau County residents accounted for 90% of the total clientele.

OCCUPATION

Analysis of occupational data was based on the US Census Bureau standard list of occupations. Results of the survey (Table 6) are compared with the US Census findings (1970) in Table 7. There seem to be no overall systematic differences in occupation when boat fishermen are compared to regional populations. However, boat fishermen were somewhat lower in the "clerical and kindred workers" group, and somewhat higher in the "service workers" category, which might be accounted for by the larger proportion of men in the total sample. This second observation may reflect daily time patterns associated with some jobs that allow more time during the day for fishing.

INCOME

Family incomes for Long Island boat fishermen are reported in Table 8. Incomes ranged through the middle income categories, with more than half (60%) of the respondents reporting incomes between \$10,000 and \$20,000. Table 9 shows a comparison of average incomes for boat fishermen and the residents of Nassau County, Suffolk County, and New York City. Boat fisherman incomes fall generally between the highest and lowest average incomes for Nassau County and New York City, respectively. This finding may reflect the distribution of the study sample across these populations and may suggest an absence of locational or income discrimination within the industry.

TABLE 1

DISTRIBUTION OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS FROM THREE STUDY LOCATIONS

Location	Respondents	Percent
Montauk	201	48.8
Captree	108	26.2
Sheepshead Bay	104	25.0
Total Responding	413	100.0

TABLE 2

AGE DISTRIBUTION OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Age Group	Number	Percent
19 and under	28	7.5
20-29	127	33.9
30-39	85	22.6
40-49	73	19.3
50-59	53	14.0
60-69	6	1.7
70 and over	2	0.5
Total Responding	337	100.0

TABLE 3

MEDIAN AGES: LONG ISLAND BOAT FISHERMEN COMPARED TO
RESIDENTS OF NASSAU COUNTY, SUFFOLK COUNTY, AND NEW YORK CITY

	Median Age
Long Island boat fishermen	32.3
Nassau County	30.9
Suffolk County	26.3
New York City	32.4

TABLE 4

SEX DISTRIBUTION OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

	Number	Percent
Male	343	90.3
Female	37	9.7
TOTAL	380	100.0

TABLE 5

PLACE OF RESIDENCE OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Location	Number	Percent
Suffolk County	106	31.4
Nassau County	51	15.1
New York City	147	43.5
Westchester County	7	2.1
Upstate New York	9	2.7
Out of state	18	5.3
TOTAL Responding	338	100.0

TABLE 6
OCCUPATION OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Occupation	Number	Percentage
Professional, technical and kindred workers	50	15.6
Managers and administrators	23	7.2
Sales workers	34	10.6
Clerical and kindred workers	32	10.0
Craftsmen and kindred workers	47	14.6
Operatives (except transport)	16	5.0
Transport equipment operatives	26	8.1
Laborers (except farm)	18	5.6
Farmers and farm managers	2	.6
Farm laborers and foremen	00	0.0
Service workers (except private household)	23	7.2
Private household workers	11	3.4
Students	26	8.1
Retired	8	2.5
Unemployed	<u>5</u>	<u>1.6</u>
TOTAL RESPONDING	321	100.0

TABLE 7

PERCENTAGE COMPARISON OF OCCUPATIONS
BETWEEN LONG ISLAND BOAT FISHERMEN AND THE
RESIDENTS OF NASSAU COUNTY, SUFFOLK COUNTY, AND NEW YORK CITY

Occupation	Boat Fishermen*	Nassau County**	Suffolk County**	New York City**
Professional, technical and kindred workers	17.7%	15.1%	18.4%	15.7%
Managers and administrators	8.2	10.5	9.6	7.8
Sales workers	12.1	8.6	8.3	7.3
Clerical and kindred workers	11.3	17.5	17.4	27.1
Craftsmen and kindred workers	16.7	9.7	15.6	10.2
Operatives (except transport)	5.7	5.0	8.9	11.0
Transport equipment operatives	9.2	22.6	3.9	3.9
Laborers (except farm)	6.4	5.2	4.0	3.3
Farmers and farm managers	0.7	0.05	0.3	0.03
Farm laborers and foremen	0.0	0.06	0.3	0.05
Service workers (except private household)	8.2	0.06	0.3	0.05
Private household workers	3.9	1.0	0.7	1.3

* Adjusted percentages for comparable occupational grouping.

** Source: US Census 1970

TABLE 8
INCOME DISTRIBUTION OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Income (dollars)	Number	Percentage
4,999 or less	8	3.5
5,000 to 9,999	40	17.7
10,000 to 14,999	79	35.1
15,000 to 19,999	56	24.9
20,000 to 24,999	22	9.8
25,000 to 29,999	10	4.3
30,000 to 34,999	0	0
35,000 to 39,999	0	0
40,000 to 44,999	4	1.8
45,000 to 49,999	0	0
50,000 or more	<u>6</u>	<u>2.7</u>
TOTAL	225	100.0

Mean Income = \$14,800

TABLE 9
COMPARISON OF AVERAGE FAMILY INCOMES BETWEEN LONG ISLAND BOAT FISHERMEN
AND THE RESIDENTS OF NASSAU COUNTY, SUFFOLK COUNTY, AND NEW YORK CITY

	Mean Income (Thousands)
Long Island Boat Fishermen	\$14.8
Nassau County	17.6*
Suffolk County	13.4*
New York City	11.6*

*Note: Source for Nassau County, Suffolk County, and New York City figures is the 1970 US Census

Fishing Characteristics

Several survey questions (questionnaire items 1-10, 13, 15-16) were concerned with the nature of the fishing trip and participation in the activity by survey respondents.

PURPOSE OF OUTING

On the possibility that some people may use the rental boat service for reasons other than fishing, respondents were asked the main purpose of their outing (Table 10). As expected, most (92.4%) indicated that their main purpose was to fish. There was no trend among those citing other purposes (7.6%), but reasons included sightseeing and accompanying friends or relatives.

PREFERRED FISHING MONTHS

Table 11 shows a regular increase in preference for fishing months from a low in winter to progressively greater preference through spring, summer, and fall. The most preferred months were September and October (73.2% and 80.8%, respectively), corresponding to the annual runs of some of the more popular species of sport fish. These figures do not include, however, other populations of boat fishermen who may only use the service outside the sampling period for this study (for example, spring or summer).

LOCATION PREFERENCE

Locational preferences (Table 12) indicate a rather strong user attachment to various locations. Comparison of these findings with the overall sample distribution (Table 1) shows a comparable percentage distribution for both items. Proximity of the user's residence to the boat, user perception of fishing and boat quality, and similar factors may determine preferred location.

SOURCE OF INFORMATION ABOUT BOAT SERVICE

Most of the boat fishermen surveyed (66.4%) said that they first heard about the boat they were using from friends, relatives, or others who had used the service. Table 13 shows that another 18.3% heard about the boat through newspapers or other media advertisements, and 10.5% were informed by various kinds of promotional material (for example, brochures and signs). These results indicate that established clients make good advertisements and that media advertisement and promotional materials might be used more extensively to attract new users.

YEAR OF PARTICIPATION

The number of years of participation among Long Island boat fishermen ranged from beginners with no previous experience to those who have been involved with the sport for up to 50 years (Table 14). The most significant finding is that more than half the respondents (57.9%) had participated for less than 5 years and more than three-quarters (81.6%) had participated for less than 10 years. This may result from either a recent total increase in the number of users or a regular, rapid turnover of participants with perhaps many one-time users. Time series data are not available, however, to provide a more precise interpretation.

TABLE 10
PURPOSE OF THE TRIP

Purpose	Number	Percentage
Fishing	365	92.4
Other	<u>30</u>	<u>7.6</u>
TOTAL RESPONDING	395	100.0

TABLE 11
PREFERRED FISHING MONTHS

Month	Number	Percentage of Total Sample
January	48	11.7
February	53	12.9
March	81	19.7
April	116	28.2
May	143	34.8
June	178	43.3
July	202	49.1
August	235	57.2
September	301	73.2
October	332	80.8
November	169	41.1
December	72	17.6

TABLE 12
LOCATION PREFERENCE

Boat Location	Number	Percentage
Montauk	175	49.4
Captree	83	23.4
Sheepshead Bay	92	26.0
Other	<u>4</u>	<u>1.1</u>
TOTAL RESPONDING	354	100.0

TABLE 13
SOURCE OF INFORMATION ABOUT BOAT SERVICE

Source	Number	Percentage
Media advertisement	42	18.3
Promotional information	24	10.5
Word-of-mouth	152	66.4
Other	<u>11</u>	<u>4.8</u>
TOTAL RESPONDING	229	100.0

TABLE 14
YEARS USE OF BOAT SERVICE

Years	Number	Percentage
0-5	227	57.9
6-10	93	23.7
11-15	33	8.5
16-20	17	4.4
21-25	5	1.3
26-30	9	2.3
31-35	2	.6
36-40	3	.8
41-45	2	.5
46-50	<u>1</u>	<u>.3</u>
TOTAL RESPONDING	392	100.0

In comparison to three other fisherman studies (Table 15), Long Island boat fishermen were found to have the lowest average number of years of experience. Assuming that data from the four comparison studies are truly comparable (in data collection methods and other areas), there is no immediate explanation for this difference. One possibility, as noted above, is that boat fishing on Long Island may be growing in popularity and attracting a proportionately larger number of new participants.

FULL OR HALF DAY TRIP PREFERENCE

When asked whether they preferred a full or half day trip, most respondents (80.2%; Table 16) preferred for full day trips.

FREQUENCY OF PARTICIPATION

Boat fishermen were asked to indicate the frequency of participation during their peak fishing season, that is, when they were most involved in the activity. Survey results (Table 17) show a variation in the number of times fishermen are likely to use charter and party boat services. Few of the respondents (6%) said they participated almost every day. There is, however, an almost even split in the other three categories: (1) once or twice a week (28.6%); (2) once every two weeks (31.7%); and (3) once a month or less (33.7%). Boat operators may expect, then, a range of clients from those who participate often, and represent potential "steady" business to more casual, less dependable participants.

EQUIPMENT OWNERSHIP

Although most boat fishermen (76.6%) own their fishing equipment--rods, reels, tackle, for example (Table 18), about a quarter of the respondents (23.4%) said they rent fishing equipment. An economic analysis of these results, in terms of the revenue potential of equipment rentals, is beyond the scope of this study, but these figures may be useful to individual boat operators in deciding whether or not to initiate or expand equipment rentals as part of their overall operation.

DURATION (DAYS) OF THE TOTAL TRIP

Boat fishing is predominantly a day use activity (Table 19). Most respondents (86.9%) said they used party and charter boats for day trips only. A few (12.6%) indicated overnight or weekend trips and a negligible number (0.5%) participated in trips of three or more days. These results are generally consistent with the local and regional residential patterns reported in Table 5.

OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATIONS USED

The survey results shown in Table 20 also indicate that boat fishing is predominantly a day use activity. Most people (70.3%) did not stay overnight at the location, emphasizing again the local/regional nature of various lodging facilities, 7.5% were campers and 6.1% stayed with friends or relatives. About twice as many respondents (12.5%) who stayed overnight used motels.

TABLE 15
COMPARISON OF AVERAGE YEARS OF EXPERIENCE
BETWEEN LONG ISLAND BOAT FISHERMEN
AND FISHERMEN SURVEYED IN THREE OTHER STUDIES

Study	Mean Years of Experience
Long Island Boat Fishermen	7.2 years
Six Northeastern States ¹	26.0
NY Fresh Water Fishermen ²	24.0
Texas Shark Fishermen ³	19.0

¹Source: Bevins, et al (1968)

²Source: Moeller and Engelken (1972)

³Source: Graefe and Ditton (1976)

TABLE 16
LENGTH OF TRIP: FULL OR HALF
DAY PREFERENCE

Preference	Number	Percentage
Half day	75	19.0
Full day	316	80.2
Other	<u>3</u>	<u>.8</u>
TOTAL RESPONDING	394	100.0

TABLE 17
FREQUENCY OF PARTICIPATION

Frequency	Number	Percentage
Almost every day	24	6.0
Once or twice a week	114	28.6
Once every two weeks	126	31.7
Once a month or less	<u>134</u>	<u>33.7</u>
TOTAL RESPONDING	398	100.0

TABLE 18
EQUIPMENT OWNERSHIP

Category	Number	Percentage
Own equipment	305	76.6
Rent equipment	<u>93</u>	<u>23.4</u>
TOTAL RESPONDING	398	100.0

TABLE 19
DURATION (DAYS) OF THE TOTAL TRIP

Duration	Number	Percentage
One day only	337	86.9
Overnight or weekend	49	12.6
Three or more days	<u>2</u>	<u>0.5</u>
TOTAL RESPONDING	388	100.0

TABLE 20
OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATIONS USED

Category	Number	Percentage
Never stay overnight	253	70.3
Camping	27	7.5
Motel	45	12.5
Housekeeping cabin	3	0.8
Stay with friends or relatives	22	6.1
Other	<u>10</u>	<u>2.8</u>
TOTAL RESPONDING	360	100.0

PARTICIPATION WITH OTHERS

Results shown in Table 21 indicate that boat fishing is a relatively social activity. Only 15.2% of the sample said they always went alone. By contrast, participation with other friends ranked highest overall as the most frequent group of associates. Occupational associates and family members were also mentioned frequently. The activity, however, does not appear to be group specific. On a given occasion about one-third (29.3% to 33%) of the respondents are likely to go alone, with family, with occupational associates or with other friends.

NUMBER OF ANGLERS REPORTING CATCHES

An accurate creel census was neither attempted nor possible in this study. However, an attempt was made to determine in a relative way the level of fishing success and the most prominent sport species taken. Table 22 shows that the success rate among fishermen is not very high, which is not to say that some fishermen do not catch a lot of fish. Bluefish were caught by the greatest number of fishermen (9.2%), attributable in part to the season the survey was conducted.

USE OF CATCH

Most fishermen (80.7%) reported that they kept their catch for eating (Table 23). A few of the respondents (12.5%) gave their catch away and negligible numbers disposed of their catch in other ways.

Attitudes, Opinions, and Values

The remaining study items deal with the boat fisherman's personal response to the total fishing experience. The following findings correspond to questionnaire items 11, 12, 14, and 17.

VALUES

In a study of sport fishermen using boats, Spaulding (1970) measured values associated with the fishing experience by asking the question, "What would you miss most about going fishing if you had to stop doing it?" This question and Spaulding's approach to the study of values were duplicated in the study of Long Island boat fishermen. Responses were assigned to one of six categories defined in the original Rhode Island investigation:

1. situation change: a change of activities, change of pace, escape from routine, and the peace of mind associated with the change;
2. self-orientation; euphoria-tension dynamic: the tension and release of tension associated with the fishing experience;
3. self-orientation; integrative responses: personal integrative responses such as being able to think things through, getting a fresh look at things, lack of worry;
4. fishing situation; relationship of person to environment: active and passive relationships between the fishermen and the environment;

TABLE 21
FREQUENCY OF PARTICIPATION WITH
OTHER GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS

Group	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never	Total Responding
Alone	53 (15.2%)	38 (10.9%)	102 (29.3%)	155 (44.5%)	348 (100%)
Family	49 (14.5%)	44 (13.0%)	112 (33.0%)	134 (39.5%)	339 (100%)
Occupational associates	19 (5.8%)	30 (9.2%)	100 (30.8%)	176 (54.2%)	237 (100%)
Other friends	104 (29.3%)	74 (20.8%)	115 (32.4%)	62 (17.5%)	355 (100%)

TABLE 22
NUMBER OF ANGLERS REPORTING CATCHES

Species	Number of Anglers	Percentage of Total
Striped bass	14	3.4
Blue fish	38	9.2
Flounder	13	3.2
Tautog	20	4.8
Cod	3	0.7
Porgies	10	2.4
Tuna	1	0.2
Shark	2	0.4
Other	27	6.5

TABLE 23
USE OF CATCH

Use	Number	Percentage
Keep for eating	309	80.7
Give away	48	12.5
Sell	13	3.4
Release	8	2.1
Feed to pets	<u>5</u>	<u>1.3</u>
TOTAL RESPONDING	383	100.0

5. fishing situation; relationship of person to act of catching fish: suspense, anticipation, and challenge before catching fish; act of catching fish; relaxation, let-down, and feeling of accomplishment after catching fish; and
6. fishing situation; other relationships: mention of attributes of the environment such as peace, quiet, and beauty of nature; interpersonal relationships expressed as concern for friends, family, or solitude.

A direct comparison of these results with those of Spaulding is not possible, but it is noteworthy that the "self-orientation; euphoria-tension dynamic" ranked first in the Spaulding study. The reason for the apparent difference between Rhode Island and Long Island fishermen cannot be explained at this time, and further investigation of values is warranted.

FACTORS CONSIDERED IN MAKING A BOAT FISHING TRIP

In an effort to determine what stimulates or limits boat fishing trips, survey respondents were asked to rate the importance of 10 relevant factors (questionnaire item 11). Table 25 provides a complete breakdown of responses. The 10 items are rank-ordered below according to the percentage of respondents who rated these individual factors as very important.

1. chances of catching fish	65.0%
2. reputation of the fishing waters	62.0%
3. reputation of the boat or captain	56.2%
4. cost of the charter or party boat fee	40.6%
5. cost of the total trip	39.1%
6. distance to travel	32.8%
7. nightlife available in the area	15.9%
8. motel or resort facilities nearby	12.8%
9. other family activities in the area	12.7%
10. camping facilities nearby	11.2%

This ranking can be clearly divided into three major groups. First, the chance of catching fish, and the contribution of the area, the boat, and the captain is of primary concern to the fisherman. He is unlikely to make the trip without some reasonable expectation of catching fish. Second, the cost of the trip, both in dollars and time spent in travel, is important. Of lesser importance are the last four items related to entertainment and overnight accommodations. These findings also conform to the previously described day use nature of the activity.

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE OVERALL ENJOYMENT OF THE FISHING EXPERIENCE

Questionnaire item 12 was included to examine those factors that contribute to the total fishing experience. Responses to this question are fully reported in Table 26, and the items are rank ordered below according to the percentage of respondents who rated the 14 items as very important.

TABLE 24
VALUES ASSOCIATED WITH BOAT FISHING

Category	Number	Percentage
1. Situation change	15	6.0
2. Self-orientation		
a) Euphoria-tension Dynamic	48	19.4
b) Integrative responses	8	3.2
3. Fishing situation		
a) Person-environment	54	21.8
b) Catching fish	100	40.3
c) Other relationships	<u>23</u>	<u>9.3</u>
TOTAL RESPONDING	248	100.0

TABLE 25
FACTORS CONSIDERED IN MAKING A BOAT
FISHING TRIP

Factor	Not Very Important	Fairly Important	Very Important	Total Responding
Distance to travel	126(33.9%)	124(33.3%)	122(32.8%)	372(100%)
Cost of total trip	84(22.8%)	140(38.0%)	144(39.1%)	368(100%)
Cost of charter or party boat fee	71(20.9%)	131(38.5%)	138(40.6%)	340(100%)
Chances of catching fish	32(9.0%)	93(26.1%)	232(65.0%)	357(100%)
Reputation of fishing waters	37(10.3%)	99(27.7%)	222(62.0%)	358(100%)
Reputation of the boat or captain	47(13.5%)	105(30.3%)	195(56.2%)	347(100%)
Other family activities in area	209(63.1%)	80(24.2%)	42(12.7%)	331(100%)
Camping facilities nearby	227(69.0%)	65(19.8%)	37(11.2%)	329(100%)
Motel or resort facilities nearby	231(70.2%)	56(17.0%)	42(12.8%)	329(100%)
Nightlife available in the area	221(68.8%)	49(15.3%)	51(15.9%)	321(100%)

TABLE 26

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE OVERALL ENJOYMENT
OF THE BOAT FISHING EXPERIENCE

Factor	Not Very Important	Fairly Important	Very Important	Total Responding
Number of fish caught	56(15.3%)	108(29.6%)	201(55.1%)	365(100%)
Size of fish caught	45(12.5%)	125(34.8%)	189(52.6%)	359(100%)
Fight put up by fish	65(18.7%)	122(35.2%)	160(46.1%)	347(100%)
Weather conditions	39(11.0%)	110(31.1%)	205(57.9%)	354(100%)
Pleasant companions	31(9.3%)	133(39.7%)	171(51.0%)	335(100%)
Courteous and helpful captain	49(14.0%)	107(30.6%)	194(55.4%)	350(100%)
Courteous and helpful mates	48(13.8%)	105(30.1%)	96(56.2%)	349(100%)
A clean, good looking boat	47(13.6%)	124(35.8%)	175(50.6%)	346(100%)
Galley with food and drink for sale	121(35.4%)	104(30.4%)	117(34.2%)	342(100%)
Enclosed cabin for resting	111(32.7%)	115(33.9%)	113(33.3%)	339(100%)
Fishing gear for rent	178(52.0%)	71(20.8%)	93(27.2%)	342(100%)
Fishing tackle for sale	158(48.8%)	78(24.1%)	88(27.2%)	324(100%)
Ice and equipment for handling catch	63(19.3%)	109(33.3%)	155(47.4%)	327(100%)
Clean fishing waters	29(9.3%)	66(21.1%)	218(69.6%)	313(100%)

1. clean fishing waters	69.6%
2. weather conditions	57.9%
3. courteous and helpful mates	56.2%
4. courteous and helpful captain	55.4%
5. number of fish caught	55.1%
6. size of fish caught	52.6%
7. pleasant companions	51.0%
8. a clean, good-looking boat	50.6%
9. ice and equipment for proper handling of catch	47.4%
10. fight put up by fish	41.1%
11. galley with food and drink for sale	34.2%
12. an enclosed cabin for resting	33.3%
13. fishing gear for rent	27.2%
14. fishing tackle for sale	27.2%

Clearly, many things contribute to the success of a boat fishing trip in addition to catching fish. Quality environmental conditions, such as clean water and favorable weather, rank high, as do personal services provided by the boat captain and mates. The size and number of fish are important, of course, but so are good companionship and a good boat. Of less importance are amenities like food service and the sale or rental of equipment. These latter findings suggest fairly experienced clientele and boat users who come prepared with their own tackle and other supplies.

Saltwater Fishing License

A licence is not now required for saltwater sport fishing in New York State. Licensing is a continuing possibility, however, and an effort was made in this study to determine the opinions of boat fishermen regarding this issue. The results (Table 27) show clearly that the majority of respondents (69.5%) were opposed to a license, and most of the remaining fishermen (20.6%) indicated they might favor a license depending on how license fees were used.

Respondents were also asked how the money should be spent if a saltwater license were required. Most of those responding (39.7% of the total sample) indicated that they thought the money should be used for saltwater fishing only. A significant proportion of the sample (28.8%) did not answer this question, however.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

It is possible, on the basis of these results, to draw certain conclusions regarding the nature of Long Island charter and party boat fishermen. These identify the boat fisherman demographically and provide some insights into his interests, opinions, and values.

TABLE 27
RESPONSE TO THE POSSIBILITY OF A SALT
WATER FISHING LICENSE ON LONG ISLAND

Question	Number	Percentage
1. Favor license?		
a. <u>No</u> , do not favor under any circumstances	287	69.5
b. <u>Might favor</u> depending on what the license fee was used for.	85	20.6
c. <u>Yes</u> , favor the plan under any circumstances	9	2.2
d. No response.	<u>32</u>	<u>7.7</u>
TOTAL	413	100.0
2. If license required, how should revenue be spent?		
a. For general state purposes.	24	5.8
b. For general NY State Conservation Fund	55	13.3
c. For fishing only (salt or fresh water)	51	12.3
d. For saltwater fishing only	164	39.7
e. No response	<u>119</u>	<u>28.8</u>
TOTAL	413	100.0

Demographic Characteristics

Long Island boat fishing is predominantly a male-oriented activity. Whether this stems from personal choice, tradition, social environment on the boat, or a more subtle form of discrimination is unknown. However, considering that the industry is now drawing users from only half the population, some boat operators may consider ways to increase their business by encouraging more women to participate. Some boats already allow fee discounts for women; other innovative promotional methods such as ladies days and free tackle and bait might also be tried.

Long Island boat fishermen were found to be mainly from the Long Island/New York City region. Within the region, however, participants cut across age, income, and occupational groupings. This description of a regional market area and the clientele may provide boat operators with a guideline for advertisement and the distribution of promotional materials.

Fishing Characteristics

Seasonal fishing preferences, as determined by this study, generally coincide with the seasonal availability of various sport species of fish. This study does not indicate an exceptionally high rate of fishing success; a more accurate creel census is suggested to derive a better measure of numbers and species caught.

There is a strong pattern of local/regional use among boat fishermen. Very few users are from outside the long Island/New York City region. Participation is on a day use basis for most fishermen, and there appears to be only a small market at this time for overnight accommodations at the site.

One of the more difficult findings to interpret is the relatively low number of years that boat fishermen, on the average, have used the service. This might be accounted for in one of three ways: (1) a recent increase in the number of new participants; (2) a high proportion of one-time users; or (3) a dropping out of fishermen after a few years of participation. It appears from responses to other questions, however, that many of those who now participate can be considered "regulars." More than 75% of those questioned said they owned their own equipment, and a substantial percentage indicated participation on a weekly basis during their peak fishing season. A time series study approach is needed to derive a better measure of frequency and duration of use; future investigations of this kind might be considered.

Attitudes, Opinions, and Values

It is becoming increasingly clear from a number of research investigations (Bryan undated; Graefe and Ditton 1976; Moeller and Engleken 1972; and Spaulding, 1971, 1970 and 1967) that satisfaction among sport fishermen is more than simply a matter of catching fish. While the expectation of catching fish is an essential ingredient, success of the angling experience may also depend on the character and quality of environment, the presence or absence of fishing companions, weather conditions, and a variety of other factors.

For the most part, Long Island boat fishermen appear to be relatively pragmatic in their approach to the activity. In both their values (Table 24) and reasons for making the trip (Table 25), the chance of catching fish was a basic motivation. This included the value associated with the fishing waters and the reputation of boat and captain. Costs and travel distances also ranked as important considerations.

Beyond what might be called the prerequisites of the fishing trip, fishing becomes a more personal and esthetic experience. This is seen both in associated value determinations (Table 24) and in factors that contribute to the overall fishing experience (Table 26). Clean water, good weather, courteous and helpful boat personnel, the number and size of fish caught, pleasant companions, and an attractive boat are amenities that enhance fishing participation.

The study also identified a number of factors related to boat management. Catching fish may be the overriding reason for participation, but things like boat upkeep and personal services also matter to fishermen, and other things being equal, these will play an important part in the success of individual boats and the industry as a whole.

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APPENDIX

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

A SURVEY OF LONG ISLAND
BOAT FISHERMEN

A study conducted by the
State University of New York
and the New York
Sea Grant Institute

Your answers to the following questions will help us
develop a composite picture of Long Island boat fishermen.
You need not sign this questionnaire. All answers are confidential.

Thank you for your cooperation.

1. What is the main purpose of your outing today?

_____ (1) Fishing

_____ (2) Other: (Please specify) _____

2. During which months of the year do you go fishing on a charter or party boat? (Check one or more)

_____ January

_____ July

_____ February

_____ August

_____ March

_____ September

_____ April

_____ October

_____ May

_____ November

_____ June

_____ December

3. When you use a party or charter boat, where do you go most often? (e.g., Montauk, Sheepshead Bay, Captree, etc.)

4. How long have you used this kind of party or charter boat service?

_____ Years

5. Where did you first hear about the boat you are using today?

6. When you use a charter or party boat, do you usually prefer a half day trip or a full day trip?

_____ (1) Half day trip

_____ (2) Full day trip

7. During your peak fishing season, how often, on the average, are you likely to use a charter or party boat?

_____ (1) Almost every day

_____ (2) Once or twice a week

_____ (3) Once every two weeks

_____ (4) Once a month or less

8. Do you own your own equipment, or do you rent rods, reels and other gear?

_____ (1) Own

_____ (2) Rent

9. When you use a party or charter boat, what is usually the nature of your trip?

- _____ (1) One day trip only
_____ (2) Overnight or week-end trip
_____ (3) Trip lasting three or more days

10. If you stay one or more nights, what kind of accommodations are you most likely to use? (Please check one)

- _____ (1) Never stay overnight
_____ (2) Camping
_____ (3) Motel
_____ (4) Housekeeping cabin
_____ (5) Stay with friends or relatives
_____ (6) Other: (Please specify) _____

11. When you are thinking about making a trip to use a charter or party boat, how important are each of the following factors? Please circle one number for each factor.

	Not Very Important	Fairly Important	Very Important
a. Distance to travel	1	2	3
b. Cost of the total trip	1	2	3
c. Cost of the charter or party boat fee	1	2	3
d. Chances of catching fish	1	2	3
e. Reputation of the fishing waters	1	2	3
f. Reputation of the boat or captain	1	2	3
g. Other family activities in the area	1	2	3
h. Camping facilities nearby	1	2	3
i. Motel or resort facilities nearby	1	2	3
j. Nightlife available in the area	1	2	3
k. Other: (Please specify) _____			

12. When you use a party or charter boat, how important are each of the following factors for your total enjoyment? Please circle one number for each factor.

	Not Very Important	Fairly Important	Very Important
a. Number of fish caught	1	2	3
b. Size of fish caught	1	2	3
c. Fight put up by fish	1	2	3
d. Weather conditions	1	2	3
e. Pleasant companions	1	2	3
f. Courteous and helpful captain	1	2	3
g. Courteous and helpful mates	1	2	3
h. A clean, good looking boat	1	2	3
i. Galley with food and drink for sale	1	2	3
j. An enclosed cabin for resting	1	2	3
k. Fishing gear for rent (rods and reels)	1	2	3
l. Fishing tackle for sale (sinkers, hooks, etc.)	1	2	3
m. Ice and equipment for proper handling of catch	1	2	3
n. Clean fishing waters	1	2	3
o. Other: (Please specify) _____			

13. How often do you go fishing with each of the following individuals or groups?

a. Alone	c. With Occupational Associates
____ (1) always	____ (1) always
____ (2) usually	____ (2) usually
____ (3) sometimes	____ (3) sometimes
____ (4) never	____ (4) never
b. With Family	d. Other Friends
____ (1) always	____ (1) always
____ (2) usually	____ (2) usually
____ (3) sometimes	____ (3) sometimes
____ (4) never	____ (4) never

14. What would you miss most about going fishing if you had to stop doing it?

15. Please record your catch today by kind (species) and number of fish.
(Example: 3 Stripers, 3 Blues)
16. What do you usually do with the fish you catch? (Check only one.)
- _____ (1) Keep for eating
 - _____ (2) Give away
 - _____ (3) Sell
 - _____ (4) Release or return to the ocean
 - _____ (5) Feed to pets
17. There has been talk over the years of requiring all salt water fishermen on Long Island to buy a fishing license.
- a. Would you favor such a plan?
- _____ (1) No, do not favor under any circumstance
 - _____ (2) Might favor depending on what the license fee was used for
 - _____ (3) Yes, favor the plan under any circumstances
- b. If for some reason a fishing license was required (even though you may not agree with it), how do you think the money should be used?
- _____ (1) For general state purposes
 - _____ (2) For the general New York State Conservation Fund
 - _____ (3) For fishing only (fresh or salt water)
 - _____ (4) For salt water fishing only

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ABOUT YOURSELF:

18. What is your age?
- _____ Years
19. What is your sex?
- _____ (1) Male
 - _____ (2) Female
20. Where do you live?

City or Town

State

21. What type of work do you do? (Example: Salesman, Laborer, Carpenter, etc.)

22. Please circle the number below that best describes your TOTAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME, before taxes, in thousands of dollars.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50 Or Over

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

Your cooperation is greatly appreciate.

Please use the remainder of this page for other comments or suggestions you may have.

